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ABSTRACT

This research project analyzed the manifest and hidden curriculum of a sixth-grade writing project to determine how it transmitted societal values. Entitled "Right is Write", the writing project was a simulation game in which students played roles of writers, agents, editors, and publishers interacting to produce, evaluate, buy, and sell compositions intended for a predetermined audience. Sources of data included field notes, videotapes, teacher interviews, and a student questionnaire. The results indicated that socioeconomic and political values were transmitted through the game. Socioeconomic values manifested by students included those of earning money, becoming an effective salesperson, and producing both quality and quantities of products. Students were drawn into the web of capitalism by incentives of profit and domination. Political values were manifested both in the game itself and through interventions or constraints to its enactment. For example, predetermined content, fragmentation of time blocks, and emphasis on skills indicated traditional or conservative influences. The game illustrated many ideas of Dewey and liberalism. For example, students enacted occupational roles that integrated skills of communication, economics, and mathematics in a game of interest to them. Another political value illustrated through the game was radicalism. Students questioned unequal assets, disproportionate allocation of roles, differences in privileges, and unequal opportunities to obtain rewards. They proposed and discussed modification but did not explicitly challenge the legitimacy of the game itself and its economic and political presuppositions. (RM)

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CURRICULUM AS TRANSMITTER OF SOCIOECONOMIC AND POLITICAL VALUES: CASE STUDY OF A MIDDLE SCHOOL WRITING PROJECT[1]

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June M. Martin

Michigan State University

[1]Paper presented to the American Educational Research Association, New York City, March 21, 1982. The work reported here is derived from the Written Literacy Study, co-coordinated by Christopher M. Clark and Susan Florio, with Janis L. Elmore, June M. Martin, Rhoda J. Maxwell, and William Metheny. Research sponsored in part by the Institute for Research on Teaching, College of Education, Michigan State University, and supported by the National Institute of Education (NIE Contract No. 400-81-0014 and NIE Grant No. 90840). The opinions expressed in this report to not necessarily reflect the position, policy or endorsement of the National Institute of Education.

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Curriculum as Transmitter of Socioeconomic and Political Values: Case Study of a Middle School Writing Project[1]

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SUMMARY

The social context of a sixth grade writing project was analyzed to identify both the manifest and hidden curriculum and to relate findings to expectations and norms of society by using methods of ethnographic fieldwork. Data sources included field notes, videotapes, teacher interviews, and a student questionnaire. Findings suggest that enacted curriculum, i.e., a simulation game, shapes values through tacit acceptance of behavioral rules and an ascendant hierarchy of occupational roles, both of which determined unequal assets, privileges and decision-making power, and contributed to legitimation of inequalities of a capitalistic socioeconomic system.

A plausible case is also made to show multiple political influences on curricular activities, both from within and from without the classroom: for example, predetermined content, fragmentation of time blocks, and emphasis on skills indicated traditional or conservative influences; freedoms students experienced to explore occupational roles indicated a more liberal approach to curriculum; and student-teacher interactions about problems or conflicts encountered during enaction of "Right is Write" indicated beginnings of critical awareness, a more radical approach to curriculum making.

Results of this study can alert educators to the need for making such socioeconomic norms and political influences problematic and for reconstructing curricular experiences. Writing can become not only a tool for cultural reproduction and for technology, but also a tool for critical thinking and a stimulator of creative action for remedying injustices.

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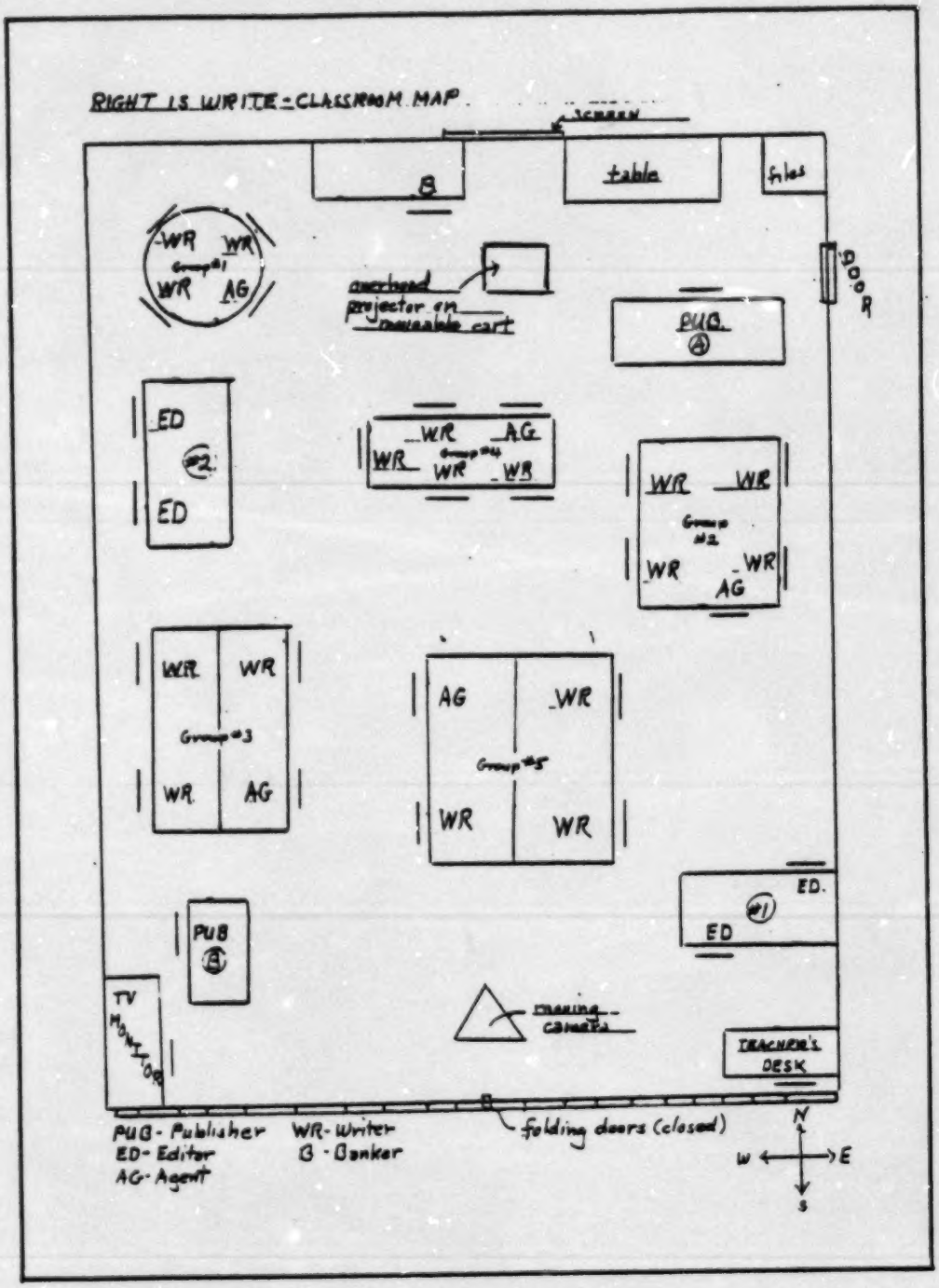
RIGHT IS WRITE - CLASSROOM MAP

Grade Six, Week #26 (Field Notes, 5/2/80)



CURRICULUM AS TRANSMITTER OF SOCIOECONOMIC AND POLITICAL VALUES

The purpose of this study is to describe and explain how teacher and students enacted one segment of a middle school writing curriculum. One problem is to describe the official or explicit writing curriculum. Another is to identify hidden or implicit values or goals of classroom members and of those who influence classroom activities from without. A third problem is to relate this information to values and practices of the larger society.

Educational theorists suggest that values (e.g., related to ideologies of society and workplace) may be revealed in the interrelated processes of content selection, instruction and evaluation (Bernstein, 1975; Eggleston, 1977). The boundaries of acceptance or legitimacy of such values or ideologies may be indicated by the presence of certain conflicts or constraints to curriculum practice (Apple, 1975). In addition, certain theoretical and historical perspectives may shed light on how or why these values or ideologies are interrelated (Giroux, 1979).

Why investigate a writing occasion for transmission of values? Studies have shown that writing is linked to achievement of political and economic goals (values) of both society and schools. Goody, Cole and Scribner (1977), in a study of the functions of writing among the Vai of North Africa, discovered not only that their writings contained records of business transactions but also that recopying and revising of such writings permitted them to

organize information according to increasingly more general or logical principles. Writing (record-keeping) also enabled the leader of the Vai to accumulate capital and to call upon the services of his neighbors. Reder & Green (1979) studied the functions of writing in an Alaskan fishing village. They noted that natives increased their involvements in legal and administrative paperwork as they made both political and economic gains. Use of writing in domains of school and the public sector gradually influenced the local literacy of church and industry. Each domain assigned particular roles and socialization processes to their writing specialists, and use of writing in each domain conveyed particular social meanings and value systems.

How do the social processes that take place in the classroom relate to those of the larger society? Florio (1979), in a study of writing in one second grade classroom in Michigan, illustrates how students' letter writing to manufacturers and to government officials was instrumental in helping them establish a city in microcosm in their classroom. Writing served both to help students organize their experiences and to give them access to the world outside.

A simulation game was chosen for analysis in preference to other writing occasions because in a simulation, students would likely be more actively involved, thus their values (goals) as well as those of the teacher would tend to be manifest. In addition simulation games tend not only to reflect processes that take place in society but research to date indicates that simulations teach values and attitudes more effectively than do other methods of instruction (Marsh, 1981).

For these reasons this investigation focuses on a writing occasion called Right Is Write, a simulation game played in a middle school classroom. Sixth grade students played roles of writers, agents, editors and publishers, interacting to produce, evaluate, and buy and sell compositions intended for a predetermined audience.

After indicating situational context, data and methods from which this study is derived, Right Is Write will be described first, from the viewpoints of participants in the project - teacher, students and participant observer. Then, a plausible case will be made to show specifically what socioeconomic and political values were in evidence via Right Is Write, and how they were transmitted.

Background of research methods

The work reported is derived from a study of the acquisition of written literacy at a 2nd/3rd grade site and at a 6th grade site at each of two mid-Michigan schools throughout one school year. Entry to the sixth grade site, at which Right Is Write took place, was negotiated with an experienced teacher of communication arts and social studies. The teacher, Mrs. Anderson (pseudonym), shared with Mr. Hathaway (pseudonym), teacher of mathematics and science, responsibilities of teaching two heterogeneous groups of 30 students. Ordinarily they taught each of the two groups in the morning and again in the afternoon. They split the time blocks alloted to them in the school schedule to allow for changes of classes. However, Mrs. Anderson made special arrangements with her teaching partner to have one group of students for the entire 2½ hour morning block of time, and the other group for the entire 2½ hour

afternoon block for the purpose of having them enact the simulation game. But because of different time constraints, participants took approximately 4 weeks to complete the game.

Types of data collected at that time included the following:

1. Field notes gathered as two separate student class groups enacted the simulation game
2. Videoptapes of the simulation game (two days of project sessions) supplemented by audiotapes of small group interchanges
3. The teacher's journal entries about plans for and reflections on her writing curriculum
4. Documentation of teacher interviews
5. Samples of student writings and other classroom and school artifacts

Procedures for videotaping

The teacher suggested the writing occasion, Right Is Write, for videotaping explicitly because she anticipated much student involvement in the activity. Although both preliminary and follow up activities took place, the major (videotaped) portions of the simulation were enacted during one 2½ hour session (5/2/80), and one 1 hour session (5/6/80). For these sessions equipment was set up in the locations shown (see classroom map, p. 5). Of the five writing groups, the three nearest the camera were each provided with a microphone as was the teacher. The four microphones could be turned on or off from a central monitoring system. Two other tape recorders were placed at stations of one publisher and one editor respectively and they took

RIGHT IS WRITE - CLASSROOM MAP

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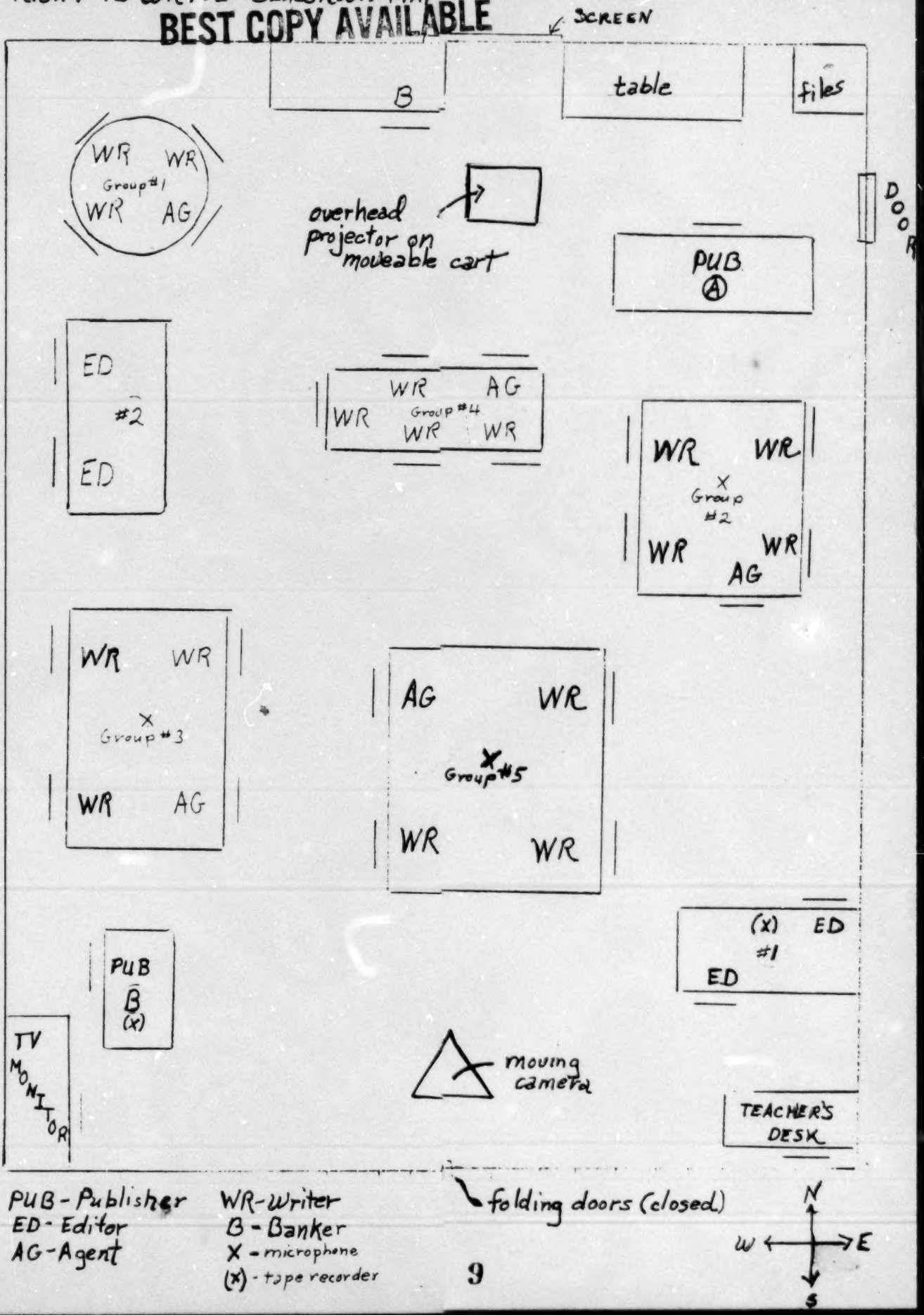

PUB - Publisher
ED - Editor
AG - Agent

WR - Writer
B - Banker
X - microphone
(x) - tape recorder

folding doors (closed)

N
W E
S

the responsibility of starting recorders when transactions were about to begin.

Procedures for analysis

Questions developed reflected the hypothesis that socioeconomic and political values were being transmitted through content selection, distribution and enaction of roles, teacher and student evaluations, and through constraints to the enactment of the game. Thus, the following questions guided the selection and analysis of data:

1. What information did the teacher select?
2. How did she distribute it?
3. What content did the students initiate or negotiate?
4. How did students evaluate processes and products of Right Is Write?
5. How did the teacher evaluate processes and products of Right Is Write?
6. What influences constrained selection, enactment and evaluation of the game?

Substantive concepts (e.g., rules, role behavior, evaluation, conflict) and logical devices (e.g., historical and analogical thinking processes, setting up polarities) were applied to facilitate processes of data analysis and reduction (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973). Working hypotheses were tested by comparing observations of similar types of happenings, and by triangulation or comparing results with other kinds of evidence (Gorden, 1969; McCutcheon, 1981). After consideration of alternative interpretations, and of both confirming and disconfirming evidence, propositions were modified or revised and conclusions synthesized.

Description of Right Is Write

Overview

Mrs. Anderson set the stage for enacting the simulation by rearranging classroom furnishings and by assigning individuals to various roles and to particular groups. She explained the objective of the game, role expectations, reward systems and time limitations. Students then enacted their roles: writers wrote stories and edited them with the option of obtaining help from their agents; agents negotiated commissions from writers for stories sold to editors; and editors sold to publishers. During this process both editors and publishers read, edited, evaluated, and accepted or rejected written products. The teacher acted as facilitator and teacher aide, the banker. To conclude Right Is Write the teacher initiated surveys to gather information for possible further enactments of the game, and published outstanding stories.

Prologue - selection of content and distribution of roles

Although Mrs. Anderson herself selected Right Is Write as an appropriate activity to enact with her students, she had to fit it within the limitations of the school schedule and make special arrangements with her teammate:

> (Journal, 5/2/80) I first discovered this game 7 or 8 years ago when I saw it reviewed in Learning Magazine - and I had our department chair order it. I used it for two or three years and then it disappeared - but was finally found again this year ... To do the game successfully I feel it is best to have a long block of time (2-3 hours) on the day it is started. Then it usually takes at least one more 1 hr. class period to finish it up.
>
> (Field notes, 5/2/80: 9:50 am) Mrs. A. says that this simulation activity should take place every 9 weeks; she feels that it is asking much of a teammate to give up the flexibility of being able to change classes in the middle of the morning or afternoon, because she needs at least one half day for the activity.

The objective that Mrs. Anderson proposed for the game, that students write one or more selections of interest to fourth or fifth graders, e.g., fiction, adventure story, science fiction, realistic story (Journal, 5/2/80; Videotape commentary, 5/2/80: 5-332) was in accordance with one of the school district's objectives for sixth grade writing, namely, "The student will write a short story or myth" (In "The Common Writings, 5-9", p. 2), thus one could contend that the school district determined the formal content or goal of the activity as well as the teacher.

Mrs. Anderson also determined criteria for role assignments. Although students were free to act out their roles in unique ways, role descriptions indicated that each role required the practice of particular skills:

> (Journal, 5/2/80) I preassigned roles for the students to play because some of the roles demand students with special skills (writing skills as well as "people" skills). Each game requires 2 publishers, 4 editors, 1 banker (teacher aide) and agents with 3-4 writers in their "care". (I ended up with 5 agents - or 5 "writing groups").
>
> (Interview, 4/28/80) Mrs. Anderson is going to assign tasks because she believes it will work much better if she does. The agent is the key person and has to know punctuation, etc, very well and be an excellent writer. Editors evaluate the writing so they have to be reasonably competent in catching mistakes in others' writing, even if they don't write very well themselves. ...Publishers need to be students who others trust and get along well with. Good leadership quality is important, Mrs. Anderson said. They have to be able to refuse work tactfully and not make people mad.

Directions for enactment of the game

After Mrs. Anderson assigned students to their respective roles and to working groups, she explained time limitations, space arrangements, the game objective, criteria for determining winners in each role category, and role responsibilities.

Because the time she had planned for introducing the game the day before was cut short, to complete her explanations she took time from the 2½ hour time block she had arranged for enacting the game:

> (Videotape commentary, 5/2/80: 1-229) Mrs. Anderson: "I'm up here. It <u>is</u> time to start. I had hoped that yesterday I would have time to give you further instructions but as it was we only had about 5 minutes, so that means we're going to take about 15-20 minutes this morning to go over exactly what is to be done, and then the whole rest of the morning you'll be <u>doing</u> something. <u>Originally</u> I had planned that we would do this activity and <u>finish</u> it this morning but now that we're getting a late start I'm not sure whether we'll be able to do that."

Mrs. Anderson explained that the <u>objective</u> of the game was to write a quality product that a publisher would buy, one that teachers would use with 4th or 5th graders to teach both comprehension skills and vocabulary skills (Videotape commentary, 5/2/80: 1-372). Next, she explained how students would be evaluated in their respective roles. The two <u>publishers</u> would be in competition with each other for the largest number of total points awarded to the stories they had purchased. The four <u>editors</u> would be evaluated by Mrs. Anderson on how well they enacted their roles and on their job as one of a board of editors who would later assign points to the stories purchased by publishers. <u>Agents</u> responded enthusiastically to the announcement that the winning agent would be the one who earned the most dollars: "Yeah! All right!", they called out (Videotape commentary, 5/2/80: 1-420). Proportionately, <u>writers</u> would have the least chance to be the #1 winner of their group, but for writers, 2nd, 3rd and 4th place winners would also be recognized. The highest number of points accorded one story determined winners of the first three places, and the author who retained or earned the largest amount of money would earn

4th place (Journal, field notes, 5/2/80).

Although only publishers and editors needed capital for purchasing stories, Mrs Anderson announced that all students would have some money:

(Field notes, 5/2/80)
Written on chalkboard:

Publishers	$5000
Editors	250
Agents	150
Writers	100

Next, Mrs. Anderson described in detail activities appropriate to the different roles. Because it was the responsibility of editors and publishers to read every composition, Mrs Anderson suggested that they look over writers' shoulders as they worked so that stories wouldn't be completely new to them later on. The first job of the agents was to obtain from the banker two forms on which writers would write final drafts and on which they would account for monetary transactions (see Appendix A), and two story starter cards per writer in their group. Writers then must choose an idea from one of the cards and develop a story from it with the help of their agent, if needed:

> (Videotape commentary, 5/2/80: 1-483) Mrs. A: "It has to be a relatively short story... This should be done on regular paper, on scrap paper. As the writers are writing the agent is there to help you with the spelling or if you want to know if you should have a new paragraph, or you have another question about punctuation or capitalization, that is what the agent is for. The agent is the expert in your group..."

> (Videotape commentary, 5/2/80: 1-499) Mrs. A: "Now, the agent may only give suggestions that are asked for. Then, at the end, when you have written something that you are rather proud of, you're ready, you think, to do the final copy, then you and the agent go over it. I suggest the writer read it out loud to the agent, then maybe the agent read it aloud to the writer. The agent again can make suggestions for change, or maybe the writer will think of some changes... When you're both convinced it's the best that it can be, considering the length of time we have..." (The agent

gives the writer forms on which to write the final draft and record-keeping information.)

Both agents and writer then estimate the worth of the story and agree upon a commission to the agent for selling it. Mrs. Anderson suggested 10% as a lower limit and 30% as somewhat high. If an editor will not accept a story, he or she must give a reason, for example, the story is poorly written, or, it needs more corrections.

Mrs. Anderson also described the teacher aide's role as banker, and her own as facilitator:

> (Videotape commentary, 5/2/80: 1-408) Mrs. Anderson: "My only role is to be the facilitator. Do you know what a facilitator is?...sorta like a mediator. But I hope I don't have to be a mediator, because that is what a mediator does, enter into disputes. A facilitator is one who sees that the game operates the way it is supposed to. But as I do that I'll also be looking at points that they award and I will determine...the only thing I will determine in this whole game - which one did the best job of editing. I tell you, it's really a hard job. I'd rather not do it."

Before she allowed students to enact the game Mrs. Anderson explained other details of procedure. She pointed out a scale or point system posted on the classroom door that the board of editors would use for assigning points to stories purchased by the publishers:

> (Videotape commentary, 5/2/80; 1-611)
> 0-7, "acceptable but not top notch, for anyone who has made the effort"
> 8-11, "good"
> 12-16, "high"
> 17-20, "top notch, excellent story"

She suggested different formats that writers could use and described how they could best use the story starters:

> (Videotape commentary, 5/2/80:1-620) Mrs. A: "If the story starters are returned after use, writers can pick out a second one. They can be non-fiction, an article, a make-believe story, an explanation, et cetera... Writers don't have to stick to all the suggested ideas of the story starters...about one page in length...You can make up your own title..Use as many vocabulary words as you can."

Agents could promote the writings by embellishing them with a summary "blurb" or with an illustration. Mrs. Anderson then directed agents to get materials from the banker, but since students wouldn't need it right away, money would be distributed later (Videotape commentary, 5/2/80: 1).

Enaction of the game

Students and teacher enacted the game in three time segments. Highlights of each included the following incidents: Part I (Friday, 5/2/80, before break time) - Editors and publishers displayed their status symbols to writers and agents; one agent suggested how the game might not be like the real world. Part II (Friday, 5/2/80, after break time) - The teacher clarified processes for figuring commissions and other game procedures; students and teacher confronted conflicting personal goals; the teacher commended students for the number of compositions they completed and for their cooperation. Part III (Tuesday, 5/6/80, afternoon) - Time constraints both stimulated writing and frustrated individual goals; publishers formed a coalition; and students opted for more prestigeous roles.

Part I (Friday morning). Two editors took the liberty of writing "Out to Lunch", and a third wrote "Out to Breakfast" on placards propped on their office tables before they left their assigned areas (Field notes, 5/2/80; 8:48 am). As writers selected topics and asked advice from their agent, editors and publishers began looking to see what writers were doing. As writers received their money, their agent suggested a possible commission. Publishers and editors very obviously began to show the monies they had received as they now watched writers begin to write.

At one table two publishers engaged in dialogue with writers

and their agent. The publishers then rationalized and bragged about the large amounts of money they were given:

(Videotape commentary, 5/2/80: 2-569)
Tim (Publisher): "You carry yours with you?"
Marta (Publisher): "Mine's down there."
Writer: "I'll carry your money for you, Marta."
Tim: "Yeah."
Marta: "You guys, we have this much money because we've got to buy stories."
Agent (jokingly): "I lost a $100 bill."
Tim (licking a sucker): "We could buy every story in this class for 100 bucks and still have a lotta money left!" (Agent sticks her tongue out at Tim, and writers continue with their efforts to write.)
Marta: "What if we really had this much? I'd say good-bye and go. Pfft!"
Tim: "I had (started with) $5000!"
Marta: "So did I."

Publishers displayed their privileges (status symbols) in other ways as well. Marta asked to read a story just completed by a writer:

(Videotape commentary, 5/2/80, 2-588)
Karen (to Marta): "Oh, please don't read it."
Marta: "Why? I'm not gonna laugh at it. Really! I'm not going to say anything to anybody else."
Karen (reluctantly): "All right."

Writers thus open themselves to criticism when they submit their writings to the scrutiny of those in a position to evaluate them.

Those in upper echelon positions not only had access to certain privileges, but could confer those privileges on others:

(Videotape commentary, 5/2/80: 2-550)
Writer (to editor): "Do you have any more gum?" (2 times)
Don (editor): "It's his (points to Tim)."
Writer (to Tim, publisher): "Do you have any more gum?" (Tim shakes his head)
Writer: "Are you sure?"
Don: "You see. You're not an editor, so you can't have a piece of gum." (Don stands at table, flips pencil, chews gum)
Agent (sarcastically): "Only editors are allowed to have gum, right?"
Tim: "Editors and agents...yeah, and one agent, right, and one writer." (Tim looks over to writer who is already

chewing gum.)
Agent (laughs, speaks sarcastically): "That helps a lot. I've got braces."

Mrs. Anderson suggested to an agent that she approach more than one editor and sell to the one offering the better price. The agent did not show excitement about the prospect and later commented to a writer that the real world would not consist of such a large proportion of writers as in the game:

(Videotape commentary, 5/2/80: 2-590)
Mrs. Anderson (after suggesting to Tara, agent, that she go back to the editor that offered $75, not $70): "Wouldn't you do that in the real world if you were trying to make money?"...
Tara (to writer, sarcastically): "The real world. I'm sure we're all going to be writers in the real world."

By mid-morning one of the editors had added another message on a placard:

(Videotape commentary, 5/2/80: 3-052)
Tara, agent, calls over to Carol, editor: "Honestly, Carol, 'Out to Lunch' and 'In'?" (as Carol sits back in her chair, fingers her money)

Not only agents but editors and facilitator helped writers with word meanings, spelling, and points at which to begin a new paragraph. As a story was completed writer and agent began bargaining for the percentage of its sale. Editors began bidding for stories. At this point, Mrs. Anderson announced a 15 minute break. About half the students chose to play outdoors, and the remainder to continue with the game. As one publisher, Tim, crossed the room, Mrs. Anderson looked at the money he was carrying and called out to him:

(Videotape commentary, 5/2/80: 3-299)
Mrs. Anderson: "You sure like carrying that money around, don't you?"
Tim: "I've seen people, ah..."
Mrs. A: "Lightfingered?"
Tim: "Ah, yeah."

Part II (Friday, after break time). Mrs. Anderson called for the attention of all students and clarified game procedures. she reminded writers that they should never award an agent more than 40% commission, and used the overhead projector to show them how to figure commissions through processes of multiplication. She reminded editors to take work they had purchased to each publisher in turn, and emphasized that interest generated and use of vocabulary should serve as criteria for evaluation in preference to neatness. Students should stop their activities five minutes before the end of the period, and she would then collect materials they are using. (Videotape commentary, 5/2/80; 3-380)

Responding to student questions, Mrs. Anderson explained that agents only sell to editors and editors only to publishers. Writers should use their agents for at least their first sale. Publishers had more money to spend because they had a large organization behind them, whereas editors had less money but stood to earn the most. (Videotape commentary, 5/2/80: 3-500)

As students continued to write Mrs. Anderson checked with Tim (publisher) to see if he had made a proper entry for a story he had purchased. She told him that accurate record keeping was important (see form used by publishers, Appendix B).

One writer wanted to submit the same (or similar) stories to different editors. Mrs. Anderson said that his plan was unacceptable because publication by different publishers would violate the copyright law. (Videotape commentary, 5/2/80: 3-557)

Another writer became frustrated because he was not making the progress he desired (His goal was to complete 4 stories). (Videotape commentary, 5/2/80: 3-575; Field notes, p. 3)

Carol (editor) cried because she had not yet purchased any stories. Mrs. Anderson counseled her to be more aggressive - to search out and offer to purchase stories even before they are completed. Mrs. Anderson explained to the teacher aide that if students were to play the game more often, writing would become more important than money. She compared two editors, Sam, interested only in making money, whereas Don's goal was to purchase quality work as well. (Videotape commentary, 5/2/80: 4-211)

Near the end of the morning Mrs. Anderson announced that the board of editors would be excused from class on Monday of the following week to evaluate writings purchased by publishers.

Dirk (writer) asked Mrs. Anderson if he could bring his paper home to work on it but she suggested that instead he write his ideas on separate paper.

Before dismissing students Mrs. Anderson asked publishers about how many stories they had purchased, and writers about how many they had written. She announced that they would continue the game the following Tuesday afternoon (..."that is the only time next week where I can see that we can have one hour of uninterrupted time." - Videotaped commentary, 5/2/80: 4-590), and commended them on their spirit of cooperation:

> (Videotaped commentary, 5/2/80: 4-619)
> Mrs. A: "How many of you had a good time now?"(Students raise hands.) Do you know - in all that time, do you know what you were doing?...You were working."
> Student: "What?"
> Mrs. A: "It probably never occurred to some of you, did it?"
> Student: "Working with money!"
> Mrs. A: "And you were very cooperative with each other. You can applaud for each other. (Students clap) That was very good. You can go to special area, Okay?"

Part III (Tuesday afternoon). The precious uninterrupted hour that Mrs. Anderson anticipated was almost immediately interrupted by the sound of a buzzer. This was followed by an evacuation and return of occupants to the school building, a follow up exhortation by Mrs. Anderson in which she told students that all fire alarms were to be taken seriously, and by periodic announcements over the public address system (Videotape commentary, 5/6/80: 1-146; Journal, 5/6/80)

Mrs. Anderson checked to see if students had something to do during the remainder of game time. She directed that writers could sell their own stories if they wished, and that if writers did not need them, agents could write stories also. She also suggested that a committee of 4 or 5 volunteers stay after school the following Thursday to tabulate money and determine winners.

Soon after students began to enact their roles again, Mrs. Anderson overheard two students discuss something they thought was unfair. Janet, an editor, complained that the two publishers had conspired to not pay over $100 for any piece of writing. Mrs. Anderson commented that publishers would not be buying much then, because editors were paying more than $100 to agents for stories. (Videotape commentary, 5/6/80: 1-345)

After yet another announcement over the public address system Mrs. Anderson made a suggestion to which a student responded with enthusiasm:

> (Videotape commentary, 5/6/80: 1-370)
> P.A.: "Attention, please. There will be no assembly for the eighth grade. You go on to your classes."(Announcement is repeated)
> Agent: "I want to write a story. None of my writers are gonna let me sell anything."

Mrs. A: "Write a story about all of our interruptions."
Agent: "Thank you!

Next, Mrs. Anderson began to interview students about what roles they would choose if they played the game again. She soon commented on the large number of students who wanted to be publishers in comparison to the need for them (Mrs. A: "We have ten people who'd like to be publishers and we only need two." - Videotape commentary, 5/6/80: 2-95)

In the following account Mrs. Anderson announced a stopping point. The interruptions of the afternoon appear to have been a hindrance rather than a help to at least one student. Mrs. Anderson also revealed results of her survey:

(Field notes, 5/6/80, p. 2; Videotape commentary, 5/6/80: 2-264)
1:24 Mrs. A: "In five minutes we'll have to stop."
1:27 Dirk bends his pen...He again begins to write. Mrs. A: "No more transactions." (Dirk pounds on the table and begins to cry.)
1:30 Dirk: "Dam!" (He crumples up his papers, throws them into the waste basket)
1:32 Dirk breaks a pencil in two...
1:33 Mrs. A: "...I want you to clip any work that you're currently working on that you did not finish... clip it with the money and the name tag..." (Dirk retrieves his papers from the waste basket, smooths them out)
1:34 Student speaks to Dirk. Dirk smiles.
1:35 Dirk puts his pen back together. Other students laugh. Mrs. A reprimands one of them.
1:36 Mrs. A announces to students the results of her survey. She tells them that only 4 people want to be writers. They respond that in the other positions they can earn more money and that it is harder to win the game by being a writer.
1:37 Mrs. A announces break time.
1:38 Dirk: "If I just had three more minutes!"

Epilogue

Mrs. Anderson followed up the large group enactions of the game by having the board of editors evaluate written products accepted by publishers, by asking students for their reactions

to playing Right Is Write, and by distributing copies of the winning stories to game participants at the end of the school year (Journal, 5/30/80; Appendix C). Mrs. Anderson admitted that there were lessons to be learned in economics (as well as in writing), but she did not have time to deal with them (Videotape commentary, 5/6/80: 4-210).

Perhaps students were already learning lessons in economics. One student suggested a modification of the unbalanced distribution of roles. Others saw money as problematic:

> (Videotape commentary, 5/6/80:2-217)
> (Students are picking up envelopes of material used during the game. A small group of students talk with Mrs. Anderson at front of the room)
> Student: "Are we going to do this again?
> Mrs. A: "I don't know. We'll have to see if we have time. It takes so long. We'll have to work it out with Mr. Hathaway. Possibly, we'll do it one more time."
> Student: "Okay."
> Student: "We going to do it the whole...
> Agent: "Yeah, have 8 editors, 4 publishers."
> Mrs. A:"...be kinda hard to do the whole thing."
> Student: (suggests playing the game, but skipping directions)
> Mrs. A: "We could, couldn't we? Now that you know the rules, I wouldn't have to explain it. It's a good idea."
>
> (Journal, 5/16/80)
> I also had the kids fill out an evaluation form on "R Is W" and we discussed them in class...In our <u>discussion</u> several kids mentioned that money caused problems - 1) they lost it, 2) their agents charged too high a commission, 3) the publishers didn't pay enough, 4) someone took their money, etc.

Mrs. Anderson enjoyed doing simulations and other activities that extended beyond time blocks alloted to her in the school schedule. Time constraints became a major reason why she decided upon an elementary rather than a middle school teaching position for the following year:

> (Journal, 5/2/80) ...it was the <u>exciting kind of day I love</u>. Just the excitement in the eyes of the kids as they worked (although I know they called it "<u>playing a game</u>")

was a great reward...

> I have applied for a part-time 4th-5th grade position next year - for a variety of reasons - but I know that one of the main reasons is so I can have my own small nest of kids everyday and have the time and space to do more of this type of thing. I'm already thinking - wouldn't it be fun to do this 2 or 3 (or more!) times a year and have the end result be a magazine to sell the rest of the student body. Each group of writers could deal with a different theme - humor, sports, school news, etc!

Commentary

What socioeconomic and political values may have been transmitted through Right Is Write?

The major socioeconomic values resembled those of our capitalistic market economy (Bowles & Gintis, 1976). The manifest or formal goal was that of producing a product - a quality piece of writing. It was to have certain "marketable" qualities or components, e.g., be attractive in appearance, have correct punctuation, capitalization and paragraphing, a challenging vocabulary, and be of interest to a prespecified consumer audience of 4th and 5th graders. Even as Mrs. Anderson urged students to work competitively, she she commended them for working cooperatively. She assigned students to different roles (division of labor) to collectively produce similar products. Upper echelon roles (Publishers, Editors, Agents) were fewer whereas workers (Writers) were many. Mrs. Anderson distributed the top echelon role (publisher) to students she deemed had "people" or "leadership" skills, middle management roles (editor, agent) to those she deemed able to assist others with basic skills, or the "mechanics" of writing, whereas for the common writers, although they had previous experience with their task, no prerequisites were specified.

Those in upper echelon roles both were assigned to and assumed certain privileges or status symbols. For example, publishers had

a 50% opportunity of becoming #1 winner in their category; editors, a 25% chance; agents, 20%, and writers, only 1 chance in 14 or 1 in 16. The relatively large amounts of capital distributed to publishers was flaunted and rationalized by them and also rationalized by the teacher. When enacting their roles publishers and editors also exercised certain other options (privileges) that they attributed to their positions, e.g., chewing gum, being "out to lunch". They also supervised and evaluated products of the workers (writers).

As students enacted their roles, goals or values, aspects of the general objective of the game - that of producing a quality product - became personalized. For example, one editor (Sam) aimed to earn as much money as possible with little concern about quality, whereas another editor (Don) was concerned about both; another editor was in tears because at the end of one simulation session, she had not yet purchased or sold any stories; and one writer (Kirt) was frustrated because he did not achieve his goal of writing four complete stories. Thus students manifested socioeconomic values including those of earning money, becoming an effective salesperson, and producing both quality and quantities of products. They appear to be drawn into the web of capitalism, drawn by incentives of profit and domination.

Political values or goals were manifested both in the game itself and through interventions or constraints to its enactment. Different political interpretations may be seen to be in accord with various historical and contemporary curricular perspectives, i.e., the technological or traditional efficiency means-ends rationale of Ralph Tyler, facilitating a conservative approach to curriculum; the pragmatic, experiential and student-based approach of John

Dewey, facilitating a progressive or liberal appriach; and the reconceptual or social reconstructionist viewpoints of Paulo Freire or Michael Apple, facilitating a more radical approach to curriculum development.

What elements of each are present in Right Is Write?

Curricular components traditionally associated with the Tyler Rationale (1949) are goals, efficient means to achieve these goals, and outcomes that can be assessed or tested and that are equivalent to the predetermined goals. Tyler's approach to curriculum development promotes a traditional or conservative view of schooling. In this view the task of the school is to identify portions of knowledge essential to enable students to function in and to maintain a status quo society, and to teach this knowledge effectively and efficiently. Subject matter, or basic skills is the core around which school experiences should be organized, (Corl, 1981)

From this perspective the school reified and documented writing components in at least three ways: first, by means of instructional constraints,i.e., time allocations - because the administrative system of the school could interrupt classroom activities at any time (e.g., public address announcements, fire drill) and because of school scheduling practices (short class periods), work was completed in fragmented segments of time; second, content materials available for use - namely, the story starter cards stimulated students to write fiction (see Appendix C) in preference to articles, opinions or other potentially critical types of composition proposed by Mrs. Anderson that might chalenge the status quo; and third, assessment - agents and other participants in Right Is Write gave feedback to writers as needed, particularly

regarding mechanics of writing or basic skills, thus facilitating efficient assimilation of writing skills considered necessary for entry into occupations of the common and larger workforce necessary to maintain a status quo society.

In contrast to traditionalists, Dewey (1944) would argue that curriculum should not be centered on a predetermined aggregate of skills, but rather on the interests of students. He advised that time should be divided, not according to traditional subject matter, but according to the primary focus of the learning activity. Dewey suggested that the teacher involve students in the study of the process and content of occupations because they provide both problem situations and means to guide students according to their needs and interests (Baker, 1955). As students become involved in outwardly planning and reinventing as they perform work, they become saturated with values from the society it recapitulates (Dewey, 1942). Dewey reasoned that because science starts with questions rather than answers, it is fatal to social systems to have programs with fixed ends as advocated by traditionalists; rather, solutions should be sought in terms of problems as they arise (Dewey, 1930). Dewey's view of education, can be seen to correspond with a liberal perspective of education as a "transmission of modes of thought and conduct which have standards written into them... values derive from principles and standards implicit in it." (Sarup, 1978, p. 52)

Enactments of Right Is Write illustrated many ideas of Dewey, and liberalism. For example, students enacted occupational roles that integrated skills of communication, economics and mathematics in a game of interest to them. The choice of a simulation allowed students to explore an occupation, but within game parameters.

They had the opportunity to make suggestions for modifying the game the next time it might be played, although they were not encouraged to propose any radical changes.

A third interpretation of curriculum represents thinking of Freire, Apple, and other social reconstructionists. Freire advocates a curriculum that would enable persons to be active learners in preference to being passive recipients of knowledge. Students need to achieve a deep awareness of the sociocultural realities that shape their lives and of their own ability to transform such realities (Freire, 1970b). Because Freire believes that oppression comes from within the individual as well as from outside influences, his aim is not to have students accommodate themselves to the prevailing social system but to radically free themselves from unthinking conformity to its values or vested interests (Freire, 1979a).

Apple (1979) criticises both the Tyler Rationale and school practices attributed to pragmatism. The Tyler Rationale assumes an unreal quest for order that ignores means of dealing with competing ideologies that influence educational processes, and pragmatism tends to ignore the possibility that other theories contradict present reality, and even work against it. Apple points out ways that one can look at schools to discover how hegemony (ideological values and structures of social power identified with dominating groups) are manifested in commonsense curricular values, theories and practices. He suggests that teachers and their students make opportunities for discussing honestly unnecessary instances of presently existing control and domination, and for actualizing human needs, through a process of decentralization, for example.

By enacting Right Is Write, with each other and with their teacher, students manifested beginning awareness of inequities in the legitimated hierarchical system of role relationships and through the constraints that they experienced. For example, students questioned unequal assets, disproportionate allocation of roles, differences in privileges, and unequal opportunities to obtain rewards. They proposed and discussed modification but did not explicitly challenge the legitimacy of the game itself and its economic and political presuppositions.

Summary/conclusion

Although the teacher's main formal or explicit curricular goals were to have students work collectively and contribute composing, editing and evaluating skills to produce well written products, students also experienced certain socioeconomic and political values. These were manifest, for example, in the enactment of predetermined content presented to students, in their behavioral interpretation of assigned roles, through student-teacher interactions and by efforts to meet writing goals in the face of time constraints.

Through playing Right is Write students experienced that professional writing must be approved by an ascendant hierarchy of agents, editors and publishers in order to reach an intended readership; that upper echelon jobs are fewer but in greater demand; and that people in different roles legitimately start out with unequal assets, unequal power, unequal privileges, and "fixed" opportunities.

By discerning such "incidental" normative learnings and by critically relating them to interactions and values characteristic of social systems, educators and students can become either thinking

accepters or active change agents, rather than passive acceptors or perpetrators of inequities in our society. They can learn not only to question predetermined subject matter facilitated by the Tyler Rationale, and to deal with student needs and interests as emphasized by Dewey and progressivists, but also to become aware of and take action to remedy the problems or ills that pervade our society. Writing can become not only a tool for cultural reproduction and for technology, but also a tool for critical thinking and a stimulator of creative action for remedying injustices.

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FINAL COPY

CATEGORY _____ # _____

WRITER _____

Vocabulary: Print in the above space all terms from your recommended vocabulary list that appear in in your story.

TITLE _____

WRITER'S SALE SHEET

Title: _____ Suggested Sale Price $_____

Writer: _____ Commission $_____

Agent: _____ Sale Price $_____

***

PUBLISHER'S FINAL TALLY

Publisher's Name: _____

Writer's Name, or Bonus	Category	Money Paid	Quality Points (Board of Editors Only)
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			
13.			
14.			
15.			
16.			
17.			
18.			
19.			
20.			

1. (enter any Bonuses purchased = 10 Quality points) TOTAL QUALITY POINTS

_____

Dr. Pepper Group

Winning writers:

Grand prize - Marty Morand
Second place - Barbara Benson
Third place - Marna Rasmussen
Fourth place - Ernest Johnson

Winning agent - Ken Brillant
Winning editor - Sonia Jacobs
Winning publisher - Christian McNeil

Piranhas Group

Winning writers:

Grand prize - Jack Collins
Second place - Karen Courtright
Third place - Dennis Wilmington
Fourth place - Patrick Mullins

Winning agent - Robert Wenzell
Winning editor - Janet Rutledge
Winning publisher - Tim Weaver

GRAND PRIZE - Title: Buried Treasure

After 3 months of digging, my assistant and I had finally found the tomb of Im-ho-temp. As I turned on my flashlight I discovered a buried treasure next to the king's casket.

The treasure was full of diamonds and rubies. I was so happy and I jumped up and down. Suddenly we heard a noise. The casket was opening. I dropped the flashlight and my assistant and I ran to the entrance. The entrance closed and the whole tomb became dark.

All was quiet, then I heard a scream. It was my assistant who was killed by the mummy of Im-ho-temp. I became scared, then terrified. The entrance was closed and the place dark. How would I escape?

I finally had an idea. I took my gun and shot at the entrance. I felt a hand reaching for my neck. A light showed through the little bullet hole.

The place lighted up again and the mummy turned to dust, and the entrance opened. I raced out terrified. An avalanche covered the tomb. I never tried to uncover buried treasure again.

Sold for $500
Earned 71 points

Writer: Jack Collins
Agent: Ron Wastings
Editor: Don Driscoll
Publisher: Mary Rosso

SECOND PLACE - Title: Trapped!

"Hey! Where am I?" It's so dark, cold, and scary. I got up slowly and walked around. It's such a big room with so many cobwebs!

I was walking toward a door when I looked down and saw a hole. I stepped forward a little more and, BUMP - I looked up and saw a big stomach in my face. I looked up some more and there was a man in white tails with a big cigar in his mouth. He was rubbing his bald head and laughing a horrid laugh. I backed up a little and looked at him from head to toe. He walked across the room and turned quickly.

"Where am I?" I asked him.

"Oh my child, you are somewhere no one knows about."

"How did I get here?"

He walked over and flashed his hand over my face.

"In your dreams, my child, in your dreams."

I went over to the window and cried softly.

"You will suffer child."

Just then I saw my parents. I ran over to them and put my arms around them. They looked very sad.

Where am I?" I yelled.

Now I was really crying, I felt myself rolling around on the floor. Sweat was rolling down my forehead. I woke up suddenly. I laid there thinking, for a long time.

Sold for $245
Earned 71 points

Writer: Karen Courtright
Agent: Tara Foster
Editor: Mary Rosso
Publisher: Steve Michener

THIRD PLACE - Title: Footprints in the Sand

I was walking along the beach when I discovered giant footprints in the sand. I decided to follow them. After about one mile of walking, I discovered that the imprint of the feet had vanished because the tide had come in. So I decided to follow the toe prints. After I walked about five hundred yards I spotted a large bear coming right after me. I ran inside a cave near by and hid next to a rock. About five seconds later I heard "Ooh-ga, boo-ga". I stood up and found out that it was a hairy cave man from pre-historic times. I ran out of the cave frightened. Then I heard laughter, two guys were taking off suits. One of them was a cave man suit, and the other was a bear suit. I found out that it was all a hoax.

Sold for
Earned 67 points

Writer: Dennis Wilmington
Agent: Robert Wenzell
Editor: Steve Michener
Publisher: Tim Weaver

GRAND PRIZE - Title: Desert Nightmare

In the desert 2000 miles away there is an army named the Foreign Legion. They are the hardest working army in the world because they fight in the desert. One day in the heat the men were marching when they stopped to drink some water out of their canteens. They found out there was no water in them. They were so thirsty they kept seeing mirages of water. Their mouths were so dry their lips were flaking. It would be over soon. But right when all the soldiers were falling to the ground, the rest of their army arrived and all the soldiers drank water.

Sold for $300.00
Earned 70 points

Writer: Marty Morand
Agent: Ken Brillant
Editor: Chad Atwell
Publisher: Christian McNeil

SECOND PLACE - Title: Footprints in the Sand

It started out a lovely day. I was walking along the beach and swimming in the water. When I came out of the water nobody was in sight, only the imprints of some giant footprints with only three toes.

I didn't understand. How could everyone just vanish leaving only some giant footprints in the sand?

Maybe it was just a kook, but I decided to follow them anyway.

As I walked, I came to some big old shoes in the doorway of a cave. I looked inside and everyone who had been gone was in the cave laughing. So it was a hoax after all.

Sold for $80.00
Earned 65 points

Writer: Barbara Benson
Agent: Joyce Wells
Editor: Igor Gorney
Publisher: Christian McNeil

THIRD PLACE - Title: Imprisoned

Trapped, I couldn't escape. I was a prisoner in this hell hole, by my own sister. She's mad, crazy! I shouldn't be here, she should. Why was I put here? I always wondered if she was my real sister and when I found out she wasn't, boy oh boy was she mad. Why? Because I'm a princess and she is older than me and when my father dies she will take over the throne. She was planning to kill my father, take over the throne, and do away with me and succeeded. I should have said something to my father but I couldn't believe it was true and once he was dead she had control of the whole kingdom. I was trapped forever with rats running across the walls and crawling on my body. I was doomed and then .....

Sold for $170.00
Earned 62 points

Writer: Marna Rasmussen
Agent: Marie Donley
Editor: Chad Atwell
Publisher: Christian McNeil